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# COMIC SHOP NEWS™

# Who Are Those Masked Men?

Comics are full of costumed superheroes who combat crime, defeat global threats, and protect the world. But who fulfilled that role before the superheroes made their presence known?

Before the heroes, there were Masks!

Years before superheroes blazed a trail from comic books into American popular culture, the world of pulp and radio adventure was populated by an array of heroes who also combated crime, defeated global threats, and protected the world. The Shadow, the Spider, Zorro, the Green Hornet... these were the intrepid heroes who made the world a better place month after month. But they waged their own individual wars... until now.

In November, Dynamite Entertainment will bring together these characters and many others in the pages of ***Masks,*** a limited series set in the height of the pulp era. The characters at the center of this storyline are the Shadow and the Spider, two of the best-known pulp heroes—both of whom are now under license by Dynamite. As it turns out, the initial concept of ***Masks*** was developed even before those licenses were signed. "We planned this series two years before acquiring the rights to the Shadow, but we knew The Shadow and The Spider would be the lynch pins of the story," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "We knew that, if we moved forward without them, the series would not be as strong. So we held off until we signed these two agreements. Once we signed, we were ready to move it forward."

"For years now, Dynamite Entertainment and I have desired to unite all of the varied pulp characters they've been publishing into one big crossover event," legendary comic book creator *Alex Ross* said. "When the Green Hornet and Kato paved the way for a successful relaunch of the original masked duo characters, we knew that the grand prize of revivals should then be the ultimate original, the Shadow. Now, to be able for the first time in history to have these legends meet, along with fellow mysterymen makes this project a unique accomplishment. I always thought that illustrating the first hero archetypes like The Shadow would be a milestone in my career. I'm thrilled to touch upon the legends that began the very concept of the superhero in Masks with a crossover that is literally the longest overdue."

Did it take a great deal of effort to sell the concept to the companies that hold the rights to these characters? "Yes, it did!" Barrucci said. "This is the hardest crossover we have *ever* put together. we were fortunate that there was only licensor whose character we weren't able to put in the series. It was disappointing but we understood the licensor's situation and we moved forward. It happens... But all the licensors who *are* a part of this series see the value of this creation, as none of these characters have ever crossed over. This is a crossover that's been *eighty years* in the making!"

Once the concept was approved, Barrucci had to assemble the right creative team. Artistically, they knew that *Alex Ross* was the man for the job—but who should write the story? "There definitely was a who's who of creators who wanted to work on this project, and they all had unique and fantastic takes," Barrucci said, "but we had to pick one. *Chris Roberson* came up with the best overview that we felt would take the project to the next level."

Roberson, who isn't a writer typically associated with pulp adventure, explained his pulp roots and the allure this series had for him. "Actually, there have been little bits of pulp that have crept into the margins of my comics work, like the Wraith character in ***iZombie,***" Roberson said. "But in the novels and short stories that I did in my prose career before breaking into comics, there were actually quite a lot of pulp-influenced elements, from masked vigilantes to planetary romance and so on. I've been a fan of the pulps for as long as I can remember, and the opportunity to work with so many of the best-known characters is what made ***Mass*** such a perfect project for me!

"I was born in 1970, so I was just the right age to experience the great pulp revival that took place in the late 60s through late 70s. There was a whole wave of pulp material that was republished over those years, largely as nostalgia for older readers who had enjoyed that stuff in their youth—and not just pulp magazines, but old-time radio, and film serials, and on and on. Much of the pop culture of my day was pulp inspired as well, with things like ***Raiders Of The Lost Ark*** and ***Star Wars*** being the most preeminent. So the pulps and other entertainments from that era really formed a huge part of my formative influences. Personally, my favorites were probably the Shadow and Doc Savage, since they represented the prime examples of the two most prominent character types, the masked avenger and the science hero."

What's the storyline that brings these characters together? And what sort of menace requires the involvement of so many masked heroes? "The germ of the idea behind ***Masks*** is borrowed from a trilogy of stories that ran in the Spider magazine in 1938," Roberson said, "in which a new political party rose to power in New York State and instituted a fascist police state. We're taking that basic idea and building on it, creating a threat that's large enough to require the attention of all of these different heroes. The story is set in 1938 because that original story that was our inspiration was first published in 1938, and the 30s represented the 'Golden Age' of the hero pulps."

Readers who have discovered Dynamite's pulp heroes line through the high-profile relaunch of ***The Shadow*** will feel right at home in the world of ***Masks.*** "What we're doing here in ***Masks*** is very much in line with *Garth Ennis's* ***Shadow,***" Roberson said, adding that what Ennis and he are doing with the Shadow and other heroes "aren't *deconstructions* of the characters, so much as they are reconstructions, returning to the roots and then building up from there."

Dynamite's original announcement of ***Masks*** identified characters such as the Shadow, the Spider, the Green Hornet, Kato, and Zorro, but it also alluded to the involvement of other masked heroes. Who else can readers look forward to in these pages? "That would be telling!" Roberson replied with a smile.

Of course, Dynamite has used Golden Age characters like the Black Terror as inspiration for the ***Project Superpowers*** series, which was co-written by *Alex Ross*. Any chance that some of those original Golden Age heroes might be a part of this storyline? "Well, let's just say that you're on to something," Ross replied.

The Shadow, the Spider, and the Green Hornet all fit together seamlessly, since their adventures all took place at approximately the same time... but Zorro? First, he was a 19th Century hero. Second, Dynamite has already focused on his death in a ***Lone Ranger*** crossover miniseries. "Well, clearly the character of Don Diego de la Vega would be pretty long in the tooth by 1938 even if he *didn't* die," Roberson said. "But there's a long tradition of heroic legacies with these characters, and with Zorro in particular. So we'll be seeing *a* Zorro, just not necessarily *the* Zorro."

Are these characters already aware of one another? Within the structure of the miniseries, will this be the first time any of them have crossed paths? "A few of the characters have heard of one another before," Roberson said, "but this is the first time that any of them is meeting any of the others.

One of the most exciting aspects of ***Masks*** is the fact that *Alex Ross* is fully painting the first issue of the series—his first fully painted storyline in several years. What convinced Ross that this was the right book for his return to painted interiors, and how long ago did he begin working on this? "*What* convinced me was a *who* in this case: editor *Joseph Rybandt* had pushed for me to paint the first issue for the series. The concept for it was one I pitched a couple years ago, but it's taken this long to get the pieces together. As for physical work—I only started a month and a half ago, but I should be on time with this."

While Ross won't be able to paint the entire series, he said that "hopefully I'll continue contributing to the story overall, as well as doing covers and designs. The artist for the subsequent issues will be a realist like myself, so that the artwork will be consistent with the pages I've done already."

Will Ross be redesigning any of the characters for the series, or is he working with the traditional appearance of these iconic heroes? " As much as possible, I'd like to work with the characters' traditional looks," Ross said, "but we *are* going to use the Spider redesign I did for his own series, which was based on the movie serial version from the '40s. Some things are going to be a little tweaked."

Does Dynamite have plans to introduce new titles as an outgrowth of ***Masks,*** introducing new pulp-era heroes who might subsequently spin off into their own books? "Presently it's an all-star established-hero project," Barrucci said, "but we are looking at some of the characters for their own series. With the right pitch from the right creative team, you never know... We're taking this one step at a time. Putting together this crossover took years and discussing with many rights holders putting it together, we're happy that we were able to make everything align!"

***Masks #1,*** a $3.99 comic by *Chris Roberson & Alex Ross,* is slated for late November release; in addition to the standard cover editions featuring cover illustrations by *Alex Ross, Ardian Syaf, Jae Lee,* and *Francesco Francavilla,* the book will be offered with a 1-for-25 *Sean Phillips* wrap cover; a 1-for-35 *Ardian Syaf* black and white cover; a 1-for-50 *Alex Ross* virgin cover; and a 1-for-100 *Alex Ross* sketch cover.

**by Cliff Biggers**

**Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!**

*The following comics and comics-related books are tentatively slated for release on the dates given, based on the latest information provided by the publishers at press-time. If no date is listed, the books are scheduled for release sometime in the month of October. Diamond Comic Distributors' code numbers are included for ease of ordering.*

•**101 QUESTIONS ABOUT BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY HC** 10/24 Kingstone AUG121190 $8.99

•**2048 GN VOL 1 STORY OF AMERICAS FUTURE** 10/24 Kingstone AUG121191 $19.99

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•**A-BABIES VS X-BABIES #1** 10/17 Marvel AUG120579 $3.99

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•**ABSOLUTE FINAL CRISIS HC** 10/31 DC MAY120288 $99.99

*Massive collection of the Grant Morrison epic includes seven new story pages by Morrison & Doug Mahnke, seen here for the first time!*

•**ACG COLLECTED WORKS: ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN HC VOL 2** PS JUL121186 $47.99

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•**ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #1** 10/31 DC AUG120168 $4.99

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*Holy's Circus is in town! And so is murder*

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SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

JERICHO BRAND & MARY JANE PARKER
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT IT.
HEY, YOU ALWAYS SAY THE SHOW MUST GO ON!
PETER, I WISH YOU'D SKIP THAT SHOWDOWN WITH CLOWN-9 TONIGHT.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 8-27

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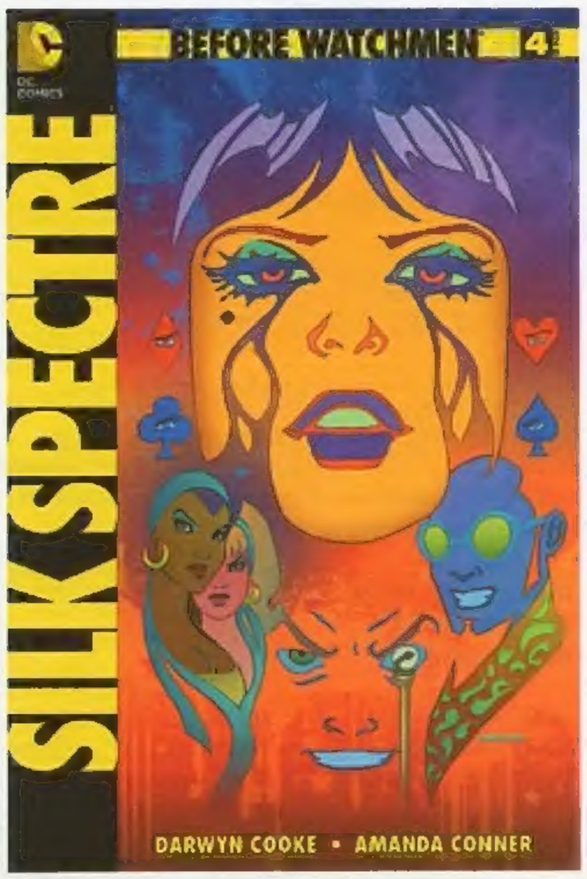


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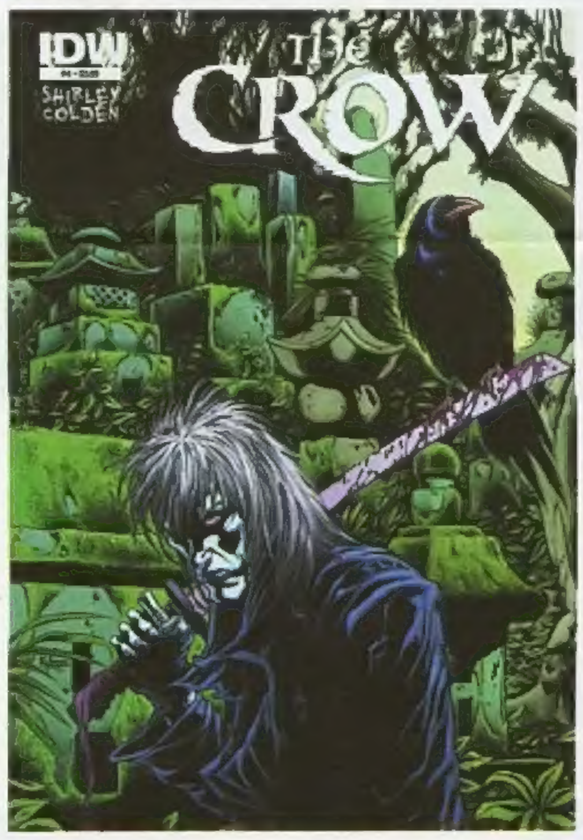


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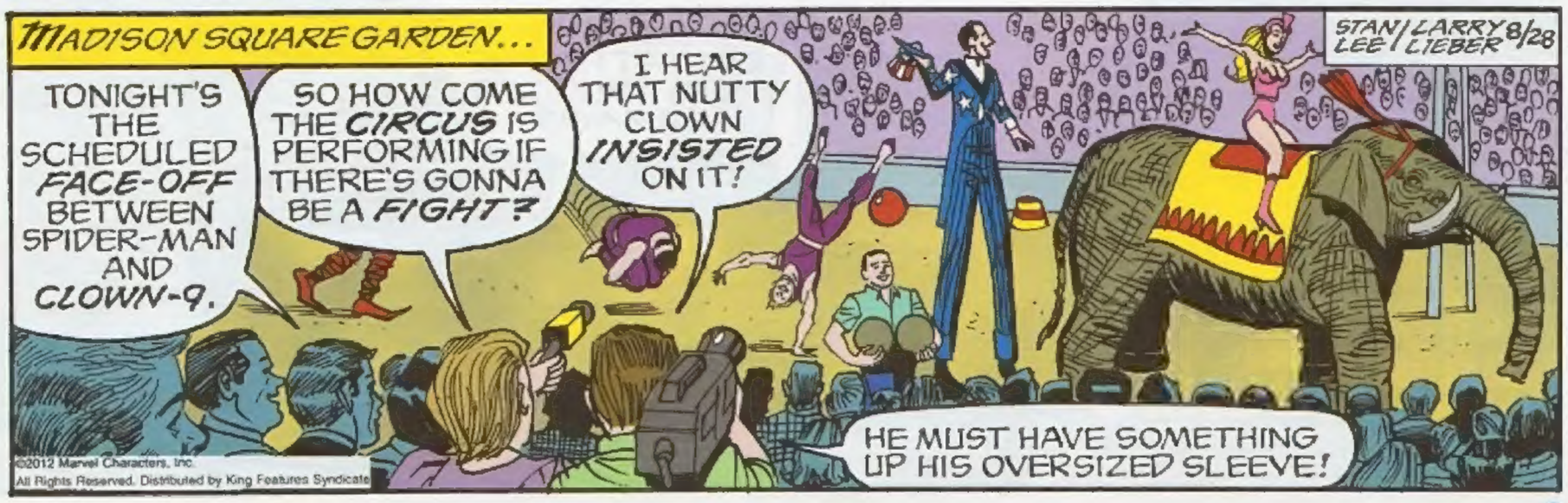
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN...
TONIGHT'S THE SCHEDULED FACE-OFF BETWEEN SPIDER-MAN AND CLOWN-9.
SO HOW COME THE CIRCUS IS PERFORMING IF THERE'S GONNA BE A FIGHT?
I HEAR THAT NUTTY CLOWN INSISTED ON IT!
HE MUST HAVE SOMETHING UP HIS OVERSIZED SLEEVE!
STAN/LARRY LEE/LIEBER 8/28
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IF SPIDER-MAN AND CLOWN-9 SHOW UP, WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO INTERFERE.
WE'LL JUST PROTECT PEOPLE FROM COLLATERAL DAMAGE.
AND DON'T WORRY, BLUE-BOYS—

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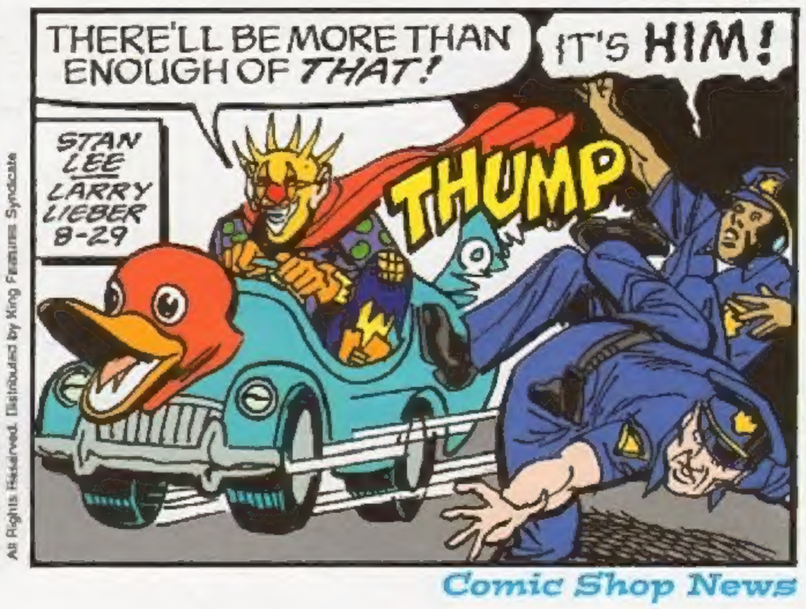

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*Joe Kubert produced two stories for this premiere issue: A new Hawkman epic, and a tale of hard times called 'Spit.' Also features Angel and The Ape by Brian Buniak and a tale of the U.S.S. Stevens by Sam Glanzman*
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*Geoff Johns is joined by Tony Daniel for a two-part chapter in the Justice League saga marching toward Trinity War*
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*House of Mystery vs. House of Secrets*
•**JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK ANNUAL #1** 10/31 DC AUG120214 $4.99
*The finale to Jeff Lemire's first epic story gues-stars Frankenstein and Amethyst*
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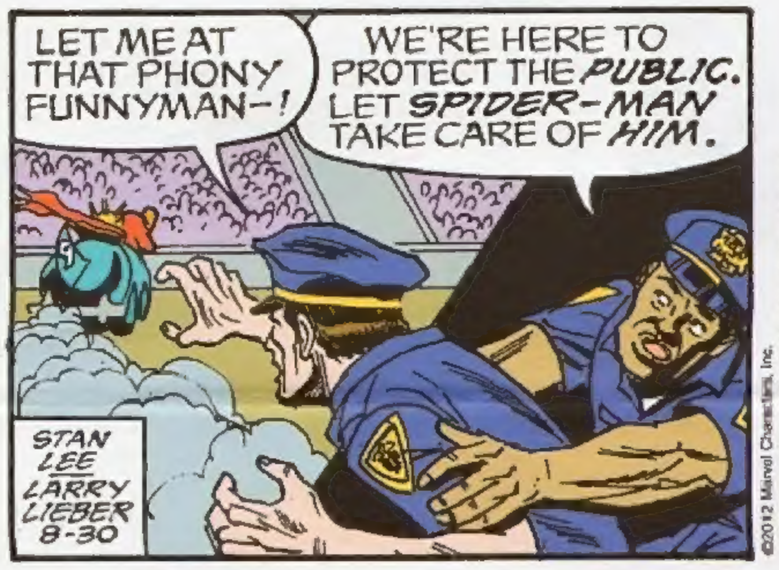

THEN WHERE'S THAT WEB-HEADED WONDER HIDING?
NYPD
A LOT CLOSER THAN YOU THINK!
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*Mark Waid, Caleb Monroe, & Steve Bryant continue the story of Steed & Peel versus the Hellfire Club*
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*The debut of The Demon in the modern-day New 52*
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*Collects Stormwatch #s #48-50, plus v2 #1-11*
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•**STUMPTOWN V2 #2** 10/10 Oni AUG121233 $3.99
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*The traitor among the team revealed*
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•**SUPER STREET FIGHTER GN VOL 1** Udon AUG121326 $34.95
•**SUPERBOY #13** 10/10 DC AUG120171 $2.99
*Ravagers guest-star*
•**SUPERCROOKS PREMIUM HC** 10/24 Marvel/Icon AUG120687 $19.99
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•**SUPERGIRL TP VOL 1: LAST DAUGHTER OF KRYPTON** 10/17 DC JUL120216 $14.99
*Collects Supergirl #s 1-7*
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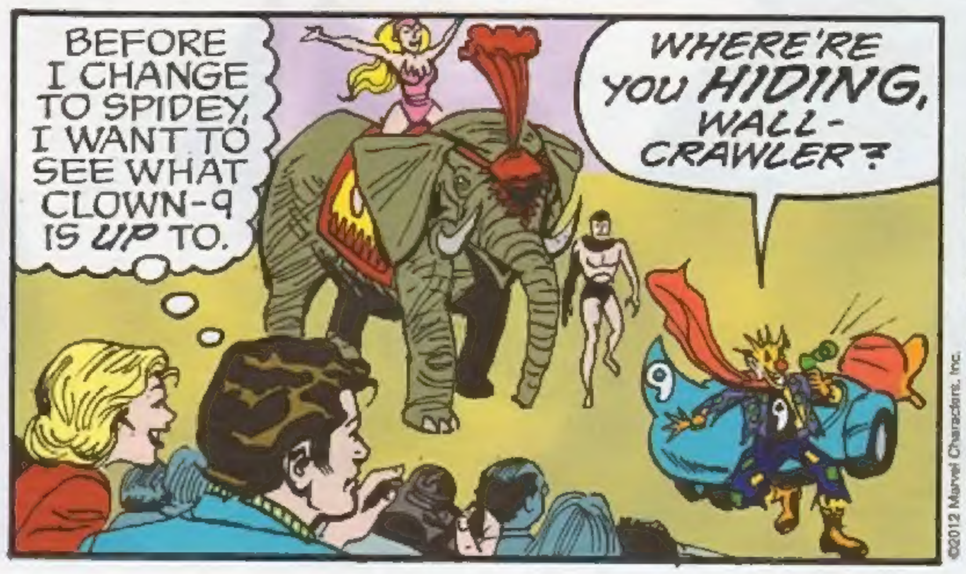
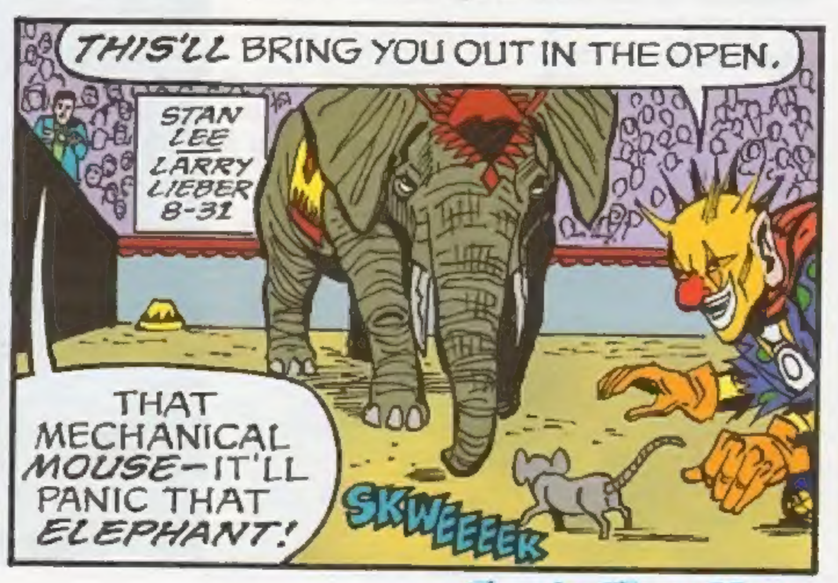
*Superman matches wits with his greatest enemy for the final time as The Man of Steel loses it*

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•**SUPERMAN FAMILY ADVENTURES #6** 10/31 DC AUG120270 $2.99

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*J. Michael Straczynski & Shane Davis cotninue the story of the Earth One Clark Kent in this original graphic novel*

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•**SUPREME #68** 10/3 Image AUG120531 $3.99

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•**SWAMP THING ANNUAL #1** 10/31 DC AUG120219 $4.99

*How the world fell to the Rot is revealed through the eyes of the event's key players*

•**SWEENEY TODD'S DEMON OF FLEET STREET ORIGINAL TEXT GN** 10/10 Classical AUG120967 $16.95

•**SWEET TOOTH #38** 10/3 Vertigo/DC AUG120298 $2.99

•**SWEET TOOTH TP VOL 5: UNNATURAL HABITAT** 10/31 Vertigo/DC JUL120259 $14.99

•**SWORD OF SORCERY #1** 10/17 DC AUG120211 $3.99

*Christy Marx & Aaron Lopresti launch Amethyst, while Anthony Bedard & Jesus Saiz present Beowulf*

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*Scoce Snyder, James Tynion IV, & Guillem March launch new series spinning OF THE of 'Night of the Owls'*

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*Learn how the secret wars of the New 52 were fought by Team 7*

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•**TEEN TITANS #13** 10/24 DC AUG120230 $2.99

*Wonder Girl must battle her former lover for possession of her stolen armor*

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•**TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES ANNUAL 2012** 10/24 IDW AUG120321 $7.99

*Original tale both written and illustrated by Kevin Eastman*

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•**TRIAGE X GN VOL 1** Yen AUG121398 $13.99

•**TRIO TP VOL 1** 10/24 IDW AUG120325 $17.99

•**TRIP TO THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD HC** 10/3 Toon JUL121232 $12.95

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•**TWILIGHT MANGA COLLECTORS ED GN** Yen AUG121400 $24.99

•**TWILIGHT SAGA NEW MOON GN VOL 1** Yen AUG121399 $14.99

•**TWOKINDS TP VOL 1** 10/3 Keenspot AUG121187 $14.99

*Collecting Thomas Fischbach's web series*

•**TWOKINDS TP VOL 2** 10/3 Keenspot AUG121188 $14.99

•**ULTIMATE COMICS IRON MAN #1 (OF 4)** 10/17 Marvel AUG120604 $3.99

*What dark motivation drives reckless Tony Stark to be one of Earth's greatest heroes? And who or what is Ultimate Mandarin?*

•**ULTIMATE COMICS SPIDER-MAN #16.1** 10/31 Marvel AUG120608 $2.99

•**ULTIMATE COMICS ULTIMATES #17** 10/24 Marvel AUG120606 $3.99

•**ULTIMATE COMICS X-MEN #17** 10/10 Marvel AUG120602 $3.99

•**ULTIMATE COMICS X-MEN #18** 10/31 Marvel AUG120603 $3.99

•**UNCANNY AVENGERS #1** 10/10 Marvel AUG120550 $3.99

*Rick Remender & John Cassaday launch Marvel NOW with a new series featuring a team made up of Avengers and X-Men*

•**UNCANNY AVENGERS BY CASSADAY POSTER** 10/10 Marvel AUG120743 $8.99

•**UNCANNY X-FORCE #32** 10/3 Marvel AUG120682 $3.99

•**UNCANNY X-FORCE PREMIUM HC BOOK 1: FINAL EXECUTION** 10/31 Marvel AUG120699 $24.99

•**UNCANNY X-MEN #19 AVX** 10/3 Marvel JUL120543 $3.99

*AvX ti-ein*

•**UNDEATH ROW #1 (OF 4)** 10/24 Antarctic AUG120763 $2.99

*Zombies in prison!*

•**UNDERSTANDING MONSTER GN** Secret Acres AUG121290 $21.95

•**UNTOLD TALES OF DOG MENDONCA & PIZZABOY ONE SHOT** 10/24 Dark Horse AUG120050 $2.99

•**UNTOLD TALES OF PUNISHER MAX #5 (OF 5)** 10/17 Marvel MAX AUG120685 $3.99

*The Punisher learns the hard way that vigilanteism only breeds more vigilantes when the ten-year-old son of one of his victims decides to take revenge on the man who killed his father.*

•**UNWRITTEN #42** 10/24 Vertigo/DC AUG120297 $2.99

•**UNWRITTEN TP VOL 6: TOMMY TAYLOR—WAR OF WORDS** 10/17 Vertigo/DC JUL120262 $16.99

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•**VALIANT MASTERS BLOODSHOT HC VOL 1** 10/24 Valiant AUG121341 $24.99

*Collects Bloodshot #s 1-8 along with an original story by the original creative team of Kevin VanHook and Don Perlin*

•**VAMPIRELLA #24** 10/24 Dynamite AUG121011 $3.99

•**VAMPIRELLA VS FLUFFY ONE SHOT** 10/24 Dynamite AUG120987 $4.99

•**VENOM #26** 10/17 Marvel AUG120599 $2.99

*Minimum Carnage tie-in*

•**VENOM TP: SAVAGE SIX** 10/17 Marvel JUL120671 $16.99

•**VENUS VERSUS VIRUS OMNIBUS ED GN VOL 2 (OF 3)** 10/3 Seven Seas JUL121215 $14.99

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•**VERY HUNGRY ZOMBIE HC** 10/3 Norton JUL121300 $14.95

•**VICTORIAN SECRET: GIRLS OF STEAMPUNK #1—MASQUERADE** 10/24 Antarctic AUG120760 $3.99

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•**VOLTRON #10** 10/24 Dynamite AUG121045 $3.99

•**VOLTRON FORCE GN VOL 4** 10/3 Viz JUL121294 $7.99

•**VOYAGA GN** Markosia AUG120747 $12.99

•**WAKE THE F*** UP #1** 10/24 Zenescope AUG121440 $2.99

*Written by Bill Jemas*

•**WALKING DEAD #103** 10/17 Image AUG120472 $2.99

•**WALKING DEAD COMPENDIUM TP VOL 2** 10/3 Image AUG120496 $59.99

*Collects Walking Dead #s 49-96*

•**WALKING DEAD MICHONNE SPECIAL** 10/10 Image AUG120473 $2.99

•**WARLORD OF MARS #25** 10/24 Dynamite AUG121038 $3.99

•**WARLORD OF MARS: DEJAH THORIS #20** 10/24 Dynamite AUG121041 $3.99

•**WARRIORS OF MARS TP** 10/31 Dynamite JUL120986 $19.99

•**WASTELAND #40** 10/24 Oni AUG121234 $3.99

•**WESTWARD #2** Tool AUG121308 $2.99

•**WHITE CLAY ONE SHOT** Adhouse AUG120752 $4.95

•**WINTER SOLDIER #12** 10/10 Marvel AUG120609 $2.99

•**WITCH HUNTER COLL TP VOL 2 BOOK 3-4** 10/3 Seven Seas JUL121217 $16.99

•**WITCHBLADE #162** 10/10 Image/Top Cow AUG120535 $2.99

•**WITCHBLADE: DEMON REBORN #4 (OF 4)** 10/24 Dynamite AUG121027 $3.99

•**WOLVERINE #314** 10/10 Marvel AUG120663 $3.99

•**WOLVERINE #315** 10/24 Marvel AUG120664 $3.99

•**WOLVERINE AND X-MEN #18** 10/10 Marvel AUG120674 $3.99

•**WOLVERINE AND X-MEN #19** 10/31 Marvel AUG120675 $3.99

•**WOLVERINE AND X-MEN BY JASON AARON TP VOL 1** 10/24 Marvel JUL120658 $14.99

•**WOLVERINE MAX #1** 10/3 Marvel MAX AUG120683 $3.99

*Ongoing series written by Jason Starr*

•**WOMANTHOLOGY: SPACE #2** 10/24 IDW AUG120400 $3.99

•**WONDER WOMAN #13** 10/17 DC AUG120152 $2.99

*A terrible betrayal forces Wonder Woman to make a deal with the gods who want her dead*

•**WONDER WOMAN ARCHIVES HC VOL 7** 10/24 DC MAR120259 $59.99

*Collects Wonder Woman tales from Wonder Woman #s 16-18 & Sensation #s 50-57*

•**WONDERLAND #4** Zenescope AUG121422 $2.99

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•**WORLD OF WARCRAFT: CURSE OF THE WORGEN TP** 10/3 DC JUL120241 $16.99

•**WORLDS' FINEST #5** 10/3 DC AUG120162 $2.99

*Power Girl and Huntress attempt to get back home to Earth 2 - but is the Boom Tube just a one-way trip?*

•**WRINKLE IN TIME GN** 10/3 Farrar, Straus and Giroux JUL121085 $19.99

•**WRITE OR WRONG: WRITERS GUIDE TO CREATING COMICS SC** Transfuzion AUG121318 $16.99

•**X 3-IN-1 ED TP VOL 4** 10/10 Viz JUL121272 $19.99

•**X-FACTOR #245** 10/17 Marvel AUG120669 $2.99

•**X-FACTOR TP VOL 16: TOGETHER AGAIN FOR FIRST TIME** 10/24 Marvel AUG120728 $16.99

•**X-MEN #37** 10/10 Marvel AUG120666 $3.99

*The Storm-Cyclops divide widens as the team starts to unravel*

•**X-MEN LEGACY #275** 10/24 Marvel AUG120680 $2.99

•**X-MEN LEGACY BY BROOKS POSTER** 10/10 Marvel AUG120745 $8.99

•**X-MEN: BISHOP'S CROSSING HC** 10/3 Marvel MAY120748 $49.99

•**X-MEN: HIDDEN YEARS TP VOL 2** 10/31 Marvel AUG120738 $34.99

•**X-O MANOWAR (ONGOING) #6** 10/17 Valiant AUG121334 $3.99

*Ninjak vs. X-O Manowar Round 2*

•**X-TREME X-MEN #5** 10/24 Marvel AUG120679 $2.99

•**YOUNG JUSTICE #21** 10/17 DC AUG120273 $2.99

•**YOUNGBLOOD #76** 10/31 Image AUG120537 $3.99

•**YU-GI-OH 5DS GN VOL 3** 10/3 Viz JUL121265 $9.99

•**ZAUCER OF ZILK #1 (OF 2)** 10/17 IDW AUG120394 $3.99

*PresentingBrendan McCarthy & Al Ewing's phantasmagorical psychedelic extravaganza*

•**ZOMBIES CHRISTMAS CAROL TP** 10/17 Marvel JUL120648 $19.99

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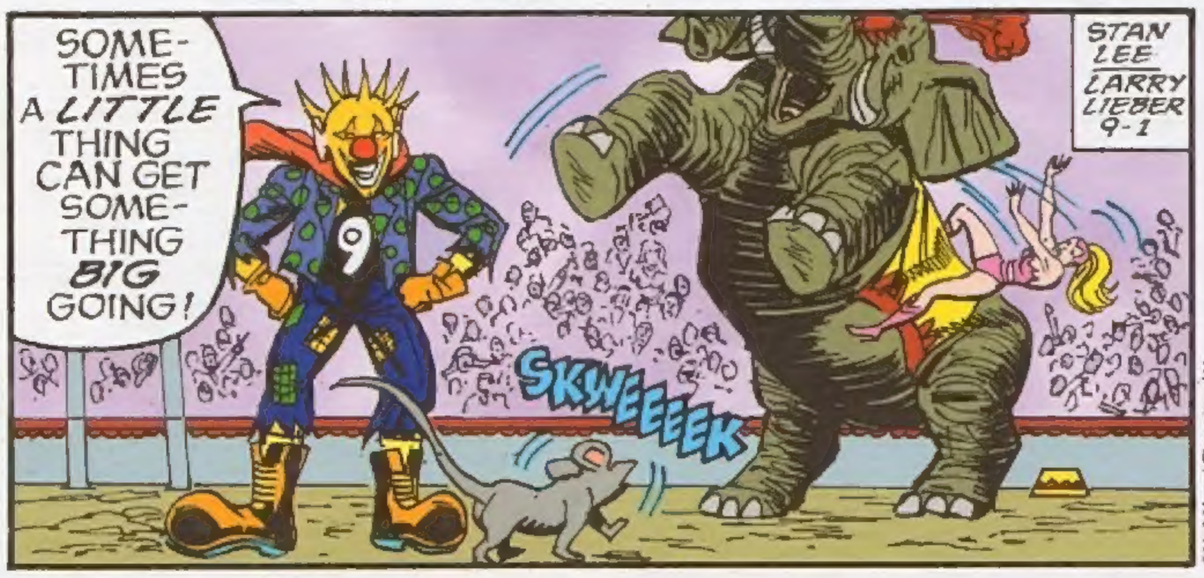

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WRITTEN BY
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ART BY
SEAN GALLOWAY

IN STORES
SEPTEMBER 2012

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